

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

An apparatus and method to insert a flexible spinal needle~~atheter~~ and minimize incidence of post dural puncture headache. The apparatus typically includes a support needle with a non-cutting piercing tip and an exteriorly mounted flexible needle~~atheter~~. The flexible needle~~atheter~~ gauge is reduced, while ease of use is increased by the exterior mounting. The flexible needle~~atheter~~ may include a kink sleeve that protects against kinking when bent during use. A central stylet maybe included to prevent entry of matter into the support needle opening during insertion. Methods using a single stick insertion procedure allow for ~~atheter~~-placement to be determined and adjusted based on physical feedback obtained during the single stick insertion.